

(19) World Intellectual Property  
Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
10 February 2005 (10.02.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 2005/013166 A1**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: **G06F 17/60**

(21) International Application Number:  
PCT/GB2004/003251

(22) International Filing Date: 23 July 2004 (23.07.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
0317469.5 25 July 2003 (25.07.2003) GB

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

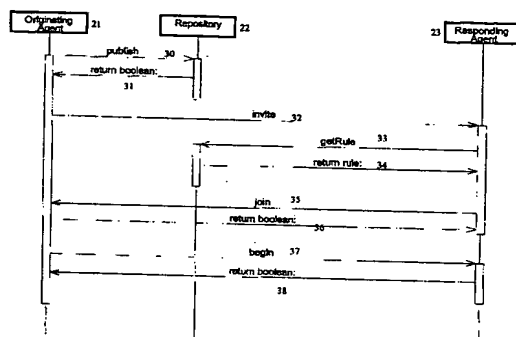
(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— with international search report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: **NEGOTIATION SYSTEM**



(57) Abstract: Negotiations for internet-based auctions or other bidding processes use a plurality of computer-based agent means 21,23,24. An originating agent 21 first defines the rules of the session by retrieving from a store 22 a previously-generated definition of the interactions required in a negotiation, and the purpose of each interaction, and a program for running a process that meets details to the repository 22 (step 30) where they can be accessed by other users 23. These users follow the rules and the matrix of matrices offered by the respondents 23. This process continues through a sequence of one or more negotiation phases with natural or artificial terminating conditions, when either a predetermined pattern of messages has been executed (or some other condition of the plurality of phases during which particular parts of the negotiation are completed, responses to requests in an earlier phase in the process constrain the responses generated in subsequent phases, and the respondents can constrain their responses to one phase according to the known rules of the phases still to come.

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